

Remarks

Entrance of this amendment, and reconsideration and allowance of the application as amended are respectfully requested. Upon entrance of this amendment, claims 1-8, 10-14, 16-33, 35-39, 41-60, 62-66 and 68-76 will be pending. The amendments to the claims constitute a bona fide attempt by the applicants to advance prosecution of the application and obtain allowance of certain claims and are not meant to acquiesce to the substance of the Examiner's rejection. It is believed that the amendments to the claims place all claims in condition for allowance and/or in better form for consideration on appeal. These amendments were not made earlier because the amendments previously made were believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Claims 15, 40 and 67 are canceled herein without prejudice, with the subject matter thereof having been incorporated into each of the independent claims at issue.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection

In the final Office Action, claims 1-8, 10-23, 25-33, 35-48, 50-60, 62-74, and 76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons set forth below.

Oftentimes, business information is stored on a computer internal to the business, i.e., a private electronic environment. In order to access the information from the outside, connection to an internal computer is needed, as well as knowledge of the particular graphical user interfaces used to access the information.

For example, an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system is an integrated transaction-processing system that handles an organization's internal information. Due to the sensitive nature of the types of information tracked by ERP systems, from both the buyer and seller perspective, heretofore ERP systems have resided on private, secure computer networks, and have not been accessible from public computer networks. Applicants present herein a technique for interfacing with an ERP system to extract data from a private electronic network, which has previously not been accessible from a public electronic

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network.

Thus, one aspect of applicants' invention is directed generally to performing one or more aspects of managing information, and in particular, managing information obtained from an ERP system in a private electronic environment, within a public electronic environment, rather than a private electronic environment.

Advantageously, aspects of the present invention minimize access to the back-end system (e.g., the ERP systems) of a private electronic environment by pre-fetching data from the back-end system and storing it on the web server of a public electronic environment. This data is then used to create and/or maintain proposals on the front-end system. This enables the information to be worked-on in a user friendly environment, and does not require the user to stay connected to the private electronic environment. When a proposal is complete, it is then forwarded to the back-end system (private electronic environment) for contract fulfillment, invoicing and accounting.

By this amendment, the independent claims have been amended to more clearly recite this aspect of applicant's invention. First, independent claims 1, 19, 26, 44, 51-53, and 71 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claims 15, 40, and 67 to recite that the private electronic environment comprises "an enterprise resource planning system." Second, independent claims 1, 19, 26, 44, 51-53, and 71, are also amended to more clearly recite applicants' invention that the data is obtained "via a public electronic environment" from a private electronic environment, and that the managed data is registered, "via the public electronic environment," with the private electronic environment. The introduction of new matter has been carefully avoided. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that no new issues are raised by these amendments.

With reference to the applied patent, Walker et al. disclose a buyer-driven e-commerce system, otherwise known in one prominent embodiment as, priceline.com's "reverse auction" business format (Priceline system), where consumers can go the Internet to name their price for goods and services, and sellers electronically decide whether to accept the customer's price.

For example, in the Priceline system, consumers submit a bid, known as a "conditional purchase offer," to buy goods or services -- airline tickets or automobiles, for example -- from unknown sellers at a certain price, and they guarantee the offer with a credit card. The Priceline system presents the offers to the sellers, who then have the option of either fulfilling or rejecting the bids, or making a counteroffer. The Priceline system then completes the transaction transferring the funds from the buyer's credit card.

When asserting a §102 rejection, it is well established that there is no anticipation unless (1) all the same elements are (2) found in exactly the same situation and (3) are united in the same way to (4) perform the identical function. As amended, applicants' independent claims and the Walker et al. patent do not have the same elements, or even functional equivalents thereof.

First, Walker et al. fails to disclose "an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment." Second, Walker et al. also fails to disclose identifying or obtaining information, "via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment to be managed." Third, Walker et al. further fails to disclose that after managing the information "within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment," the managed information or proposal is forwarded "via the public electronic environment" to the private electronic environment.

Accordingly, Walker et al. fail to disclose the same elements or functions as applicants' methods, systems, and computer products, for managing information such as a proposal. Since the system disclosed in Walker et al. do not disclose the same elements, or perform identical functions as applicants' invention, Walker et al. would not have anticipated applicants' invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 19, 26, 44, 51, 52, 53, and 71. The dependent claims are believed allowable for the same reasons noted above in connection with the independent claims from which they directly or ultimately depend, as well as for their own additional features.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection

In the Office Action, claims 24, 49, and 75 were rejected under U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

As noted above, Walker et al. fails to disclose "an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment" or disclose identifying or obtaining information, "via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment to be managed." More importantly, Walker et al. fails to teach or suggest "an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment" and identifying or obtaining information, "via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment to be managed."

In addition, Walker et al. does not address the problems associated with enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and in particular, the problem of performing one or more aspects of managing information, and in particular, information obtained from an ERP system in a private electronic environment, within a public electronic environment, rather than the private electronic environment.

For the reasons noted above, Walker et al. fail to teach or suggest methods, systems, and computer products as now recited in the amended independent claims. It is respectfully submitted therefore that applicants' invention, as recited in the claims presented is patentable over Walker et al.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone conference would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to telephone him at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

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